

## FOREST PRESERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

### Mission Statement

- To engage Maple Grove residents, academic institutions, volunteer groups, and government agencies in appreciating, understanding, protecting, and restoring the natural values and integrity of the forest and open space system, and
- To pursue additional linkages to increase the connectivity of open spaces.

### Goal and Objectives

#### Goal

- To preserve and maintain the forest and open space lands for future generations.

#### Objectives

##### Citizen Enjoyment and Quality of Life

- To encourage the general public to experience the natural environments of the open space system.

##### Land Protection and Management

- To continue to protect, restore, connect, and manage the network of forests, wetlands, and open spaces.

##### Nature Education

- To provide opportunities for visitors to learn from their experiences with nature.
- To provide nature and wildlife study opportunities while respecting the fragile character of these environments.

The mission statement, goals and objectives are the same today as they were in 2002 when they were established.

It seems appropriate at this point to further refine the Westwood plan by establishing eleven (11) strategies in order to achieve the stated goals and objectives.

Attached are the general strategies along with specific management elements relating to those strategies.

### FOREST MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

#### Strategies

##### A.

1. Manage invasive species
2. Establishment of a reforestation program
3. Establishment of a prairie restoration program
4. Confirmation of regeneration progress
5. Management of woodchip trail system
6. Construction of structures
7. Establishment of a signage system
8. Establishment of wetland/hydrology controls to avoid possible detriment to vegetative areas
9. Prohibit any use of the area that is inconsistent with the established goal of the forest and open space property
10. Provide for a means of wildlife management as governed by local and state regulations
11. Continue efforts to acquire Ethel Acres property

A.1. Manage Invasive Species

a. Priority 1

Allocate sufficient resources to achieve elimination of buckthorn and prickly ash in all areas labeled Control #1 on Exhibits 1 and 3 of the Interim Management Plan within a 5 year period. Since these areas are highly ranked Maple/Basswood forests with extensive existing overstory trees, reforestation is not required at this time.

b. Priority 2

Following eradication in Control area #1 areas, proceed to eliminate reed canary grass infestation in the Reed Canary Grass control area shown on Exhibit 1 within 1 year. The ditch block shown on Exhibit 1 should be reviewed for viability.

c. Priority 3

Proceed to eradicate buckthorn and prickly ash in Control area #2 followed by Control area #3 on Exhibits 1 and 3 within a 4 year period.

d. Continue management on an ongoing basis to stop buckthorn, prickly ash and reed canary grass invasion in all areas.

e. Review, on an annual basis, possible management plan adjustments by a qualified forest management specialist.

A.2. Establishment of a reforestation program

a. Pursue a reforestation program area S19 (2 locations) on Exhibit 3 using only native plant materials

b. To minimize destruction of tree seedlings/saplings from wildlife, provide a means to protect individual trees from wildlife.

A.3. Establishment of a prairie restoration program

a. Pursue a prairie restoration program in area N26 on Exhibit 1 and S8 and S26 on Exhibit 3.

b. Conduct prescribed burns in all 3 areas every 3 to 5 years

A.4. Confirmation of regeneration progress

- Observation and analysis of native species seedlings and saplings in the forest understory which indicates the potential of a healthy forest community which will replicate itself. Said observation, analysis and confirmation shall be provided by a forest resource specialist. In areas where regeneration is not progressing, determine cause and obtain recommendations to advance the regeneration process, which may include, but not be limited to, control burning or deer exclusion.

A.5. Management of woodchip trail system

a. Maintain existing woodchip trails

b. Following the invasive species eradication program, pursue expansion of the trail system by adding the loop around the Otterness property (if feasible as a result of Elm Creek water elevations) followed by the trails to the Ethel Acres property should that property be acquired.

c. All trails shall be wood chipped pedestrian trails with no motor vehicles allowed (except City maintenance vehicles used exclusively to maintain the forest and open space area).

A.6. Construction of Structures

a. No public buildings of any kind shall be allowed.

- b. Benches shall be allowed in selected areas where they will not lead to the degradation of the immediate area.
- c. Following the invasive species eradication, prairie reforestation and restoration programs, pursue the construction of a non-hard surface parking area at the entrance to the existing north trail off of Vicksburg Lane.

A.7. Establishment of a signage system

a. Erection of signage unique to the forest area:

1. At entrances –

- City of Maple Grove Forest and Open Space Preserve
- No motorized vehicles
- Stay on wood chip trails
- Description of the history and uniqueness of the area

2. Along trails, at various locations to delineate trail route

A.8. Establishment of wetland/hydrology controls to manage invasive species common to wetland areas and to maintain the natural ecosystems of the entire forest preservation area.

A.9. Prohibit any use of the area that is inconsistent with the goal of preservation and maintenance of the land for future generations.

- Review, on a case by case basis, all activities that take place within the forest preservation area not specifically identified within this management plan. Said activities to be reviewed by the Forest Management Committee and/or consulting forester.

A.10. Provide for a means of wildlife management as governed by local and state regulations.

- In the effort to promote regeneration of native plant materials, allow non-firearm hunting of deer and control of other wildlife as needed.

A.11. Continue efforts to acquire Ethel Acres property.

- To provide a loop trail system, as opposed to the undesirable dead end trail, efforts should resume to acquire the Ethel Acres property in total or, if not feasible, the northerly forested portion. Any trail constructed should be located within the zone identified as N14.